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ABSTRACT

This book discusses issues involved in the current debate over the nature and effectiveness of anti-poverty programs, and examines the high economic and social costs of, and the risk factors involved in, cyclical poverty. The book offers suggestions to help solve the problems of cyclical poverty and chronic disadvantage by highlighting effective local and state programs that: (1) combat early and unplanned pregnancies; (2) improve prenatal care and child health services; (3) strengthen families; and (4) improve the care and education of young children. The need for national health care reform and intensive early intervention programs for high risk populations is also discussed. Three recommendations for breaking the cycle of disadvantage are offered. First, nationwide programs that are already operating effectively should be extended to all who are eligible. These programs include Head Start and the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children. Second, states and local communities must be helped to extend those successful programs that have heretofore operated only on a small scale. Third, all concerned individuals must realize that investing in the futures of disadvantaged children necessitates a significant financial commitment. Contains 475 references. (MDM)

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